

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 5329

To authorize the establishment of a Regional China Officer Program Unit in the Department of State to monitor and assess the global presence of the People’s Republic of China and to help United States diplomatic and consular posts abroad address its malign influence and activities, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 11, 2025

Mr. MEEKS (for himself and Mr. MACKENZIE) introduced the following bill;
which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To authorize the establishment of a Regional China Officer Program Unit in the Department of State to monitor and assess the global presence of the People’s Republic of China and to help United States diplomatic and consular posts abroad address its malign influence and activities, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Regional China Officer
5 Authorization Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

3 (1) The Department of State started the Re-
4 gional China Officer (RCO) program in 2019 with
5 six officers deployed overseas.

6 (2) As of January 2025, the program had
7 grown in size to 20 RCO positions, spanning across
8 all the regional bureaus.

9 (3) RCOs assess and report on emerging pat-
10 terns in activity by the People's Republic of China
11 (PRC), help United States diplomatic missions focus
12 on the most important, PRC-related, United States
13 priorities, and help coordinate effective messaging
14 and strategies to counter PRC malign influence in
15 the region.

16 (4) The RCO program is part of the Office of
17 China Coordination in the Bureau of East Asia and
18 Pacific Affairs at the State Department.

19 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

20 It is the sense of Congress that—

21 (1) the United States is engaged in a global
22 competition for influence with the People's Republic
23 of China (PRC), which requires that the United
24 States adequately monitor and analyze PRC malign
25 activity that is contrary to United States interests
26 globally;

1 (2) the RCO program is a key asset for the De-
2 partment of State in the context of strategic com-
3 petition with China at the global, regional, and sub-
4 regional levels; and

5 (3) the United States must continue to counter
6 PRC activities that seek to coerce other countries,
7 distort markets, and undermine United States inter-
8 ests.

9 **SEC. 4. REGIONAL CHINA PROGRAM UNIT.**

10 (a) AUTHORIZATION.—The Secretary of State shall
11 establish within the Office of China Coordination of the
12 Bureau of East Asia and Pacific Affairs a Regional China
13 Officer Program Unit.

14 (b) STAFFING.—The Regional China Officer Pro-
15 gram Unit shall be comprised of—

16 (1) one Director appointed in accordance with
17 subsection (c); and

18 (2) not fewer than 20 forward-deployed Foreign
19 Service Officers assigned to United States diplo-
20 matic or consular posts or detailed to the foreign
21 ministry of an ally, to be known as Regional China
22 Officers (RCOs), who shall be responsible for—

23 (A) monitoring and reporting on activities
24 of the People’s Republic of China in the region
25 of his or her responsibility, including in the

1 commercial, development, finance, critical infra-
2 structure, technology, and military domains, in-
3 cluding projects associated with the PRC's Belt
4 and Road Initiative, Global Security Initiative,
5 and Global Development Initiative; and

6 (B) advising United States embassy per-
7 sonnel, diplomatic allies and partners, and host
8 countries on how to understand and address
9 PRC activities globally and locally.

10 (c) DIRECTOR OF THE REGIONAL CHINA OFFICER
11 PROGRAM.—

12 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after
13 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary
14 of State shall appoint a Director for the Regional
15 China Officer Program Unit from among career
16 members of the Foreign Service.

17 (2) LIMITATION ON POSITION.—The establish-
18 ment of the position of the Director pursuant to this
19 section shall not result in an increase in the overall
20 full-time equivalent positions within the Department.

21 (3) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Director shall be
22 responsible for coordinating and overseeing the ac-
23 tivities of RCOs in order to—

1 (A) improve United States responsiveness
2 to activities, strategies and tactics of the Peo-
3 ple's Republic of China (PRC);

4 (B) ensure that RCO program activities in-
5 crease the knowledge, understanding, and trust
6 of the United States by relevant target audi-
7 ences;

8 (C) identify gaps in United States engage-
9 ments regarding PRC cross-cutting activities;
10 and

11 (D) manage hiring for RCO positions.

12 (d) REGIONAL CHINA OFFICERS.—

13 (1) QUALIFICATIONS.—The Secretary of State
14 shall select and assign RCOs from among Foreign
15 Service Officers who have expertise related to the
16 PRC, including in the forms of prior experience
17 working in or on China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong,
18 and proficiency in Mandarin language.

19 (2) GEOGRAPHIC PLACEMENT.—Of the total
20 number of RCOs in the Regional China Officer Pro-
21 gram Unit, there shall be no fewer than 2 Regional
22 China Officers assigned to United States diplomatic
23 posts associated with each of the following bu-
24 reaus—

25 (A) Bureau of African Affairs;

1 (B) Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Af-
2 fairs;

3 (C) Bureau of European and Eurasian Af-
4 fairs;

5 (D) Bureau of International Organization
6 Affairs;

7 (E) Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs;

8 (F) Bureau of South and Central Asian
9 Affairs; and

10 (G) Bureau of Western Hemisphere Af-
11 fairs.

12 (e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

13 (1) EXPANSION OF THE RCO PROGRAM.—There
14 is authorized to be appropriated \$2,500,000 for each
15 of fiscal years 2026 through 2030 to—

16 (A) expand the RCO program at strategic
17 United States diplomatic missions and at the
18 foreign ministries of allies; and

19 (B) support the management of the RCO
20 program, including one Locally Employed Staff
21 support position in each geographic region.

22 (2) PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES.—There is au-
23 thorized to be appropriated \$1,250,000 for each of
24 fiscal years 2026 through 2030 with up to \$50,000
25 for each Regional China Officer to support programs

1 and public diplomacy activities of the Regional
2 China Officer Program.

3 (3) AVAILABILITY.—Amounts appropriated pur-
4 suant to the authorizations under this section are
5 authorized to remain available until expended and
6 shall be in addition to amounts otherwise authorized
7 to be appropriated for the Countering PRC Influ-
8 ence Fund.

9 (f) SUNSET.—The requirement to maintain the Re-
10 gional China Officer Program Unit and the Regional
11 China Officer Program under subsection (a) shall expire
12 on the date that is 5 years after the date of the enactment
13 of this Act.

14 (g) ALLY DEFINED.—In this Act, the term “ally”
15 means only—

16 (1) a member country of the North Atlantic
17 Treaty Organization; or

18 (2) a country designated as a major non-NATO
19 ally pursuant to the authorities provided by section
20 517 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22
21 U.S.C. 2321k).

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